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ACTION AF-00

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	EB-00	EUR-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00
	L-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-00
	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SP-00	SS-00	STR-00
	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00	PMB-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	G-00
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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0368
INFO NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 003539

SIPDIS

NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR JENDAYI FRAZER
BRUSSELS ALSO FOR USEU
LONDON FOR GURNEY
PARIS FOR NEARY
NAIROBI FOR PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: DECL. 11/26/11

TAGS: PREL PGOV PHUM ZI

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT MUGABE WALKS OUT ON EU TEAM

CLASSIFIED BY POLITICAL SECTION CHIEF MATT HARRINGTON. REASONS:
1.5 (B) AND (D).

SUMMARY

¶1. (C) A SENIOR EU TEAM HAD A VERY ROCKY MEETING WITH PRESIDENT MUGABE ON NOVEMBER 23. THE PARTICIPANTS ENGAGED IN A NORMAL DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSION OF THE DRC INTERNAL DIALOGUE AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF FOREIGN TROOPS IN DRC, BUT MUGABE BECAME INCREASINGLY IRRITATED AS THE CONVERSATION SHIFTED TO THE RECENT UN REPORT ON EXPLOITATION OF RESOURCES. MUGABE DISMISSED THE REPORT AS "ABSOLUTE NONSENSE" INSPIRED BY THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. EVERYTHING ZIMBABWE HAD DONE IN THE DRC, HE INSISTED, HAD BEEN DONE IN COOPERATION WITH THE KINSHASA GOVERNMENT. WHEN THE EU DELEGATION PRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVERS PARTICIPATING IN ZIMBABWE'S ELECTORAL PROCESS, MUGABE LASHED OUT. HE SAID THE EU SHOULD LEAVE ZIMBABWE ALONE, AS THE GOZ COULD RUN ITS OWN ELECTION. IT DID NOT NEED THE EU'S HELP. VISIBLY ANGRY, HE WALKED OUT OF THE MEETING WITHOUT A WORD, LEAVING HIS EU INTERLOCUTORS "FLABBERTASTED." THE EU OFFICIALS DID NOT EVEN TRY TO PUT A POSITIVE PUBLIC SPIN ON THE ENCOUNTER AND LATER TOLD JOURNALISTS THAT THEY HAD NOT HAD A MEETING OF THE MINDS WITH MUGABE AND THAT THE EU WOULD NOT RECOGNIZE THE OUTCOME OF THE ELECTION UNLESS MINIMUM CONDITIONS WERE RESPECTED. FOR ITS PART, THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PRESS APPLAUDED MUGABE IN BANNER, ABOVE-THE-FOLD HEADLINES FOR TELLING OFF THE EU. END SUMMARY.

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¶2. (C) BELGIAN DCM ALEXIS DE CROMBRUGGHE GAVE POLITICAL SECTION CHIEF A READOUT OF A DIFFICULT NOVEMBER 23 MEETING IN HARARE BETWEEN PRESIDENT MUGABE AND A HIGH-LEVEL EU DELEGATION COMPRISING BELGIAN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER LOUIS MICHEL, EU ENVOY JAVIER SOLANA, COMMISSIONER CHRIS PATTEN, EU SPECIAL ENVOY FOR THE GREAT LAKES ALDO AIELLO AND SPAIN'S DIRECTOR-GENERAL FOR AFRICA. CROMBRUGGHE SAID THE DELEGATION MET WITH CIVIL SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVES AND WITH OPPOSITION LEADER MORGAN TSVANGIRAI, BUT THE MEETING WITH MUGABE WAS THE CENTERPIECE OF

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THEIR ONE-DAY VISIT AND THE ONE WHICH GARNERED THE MOST MEDIA ATTENTION.

¶3. (C) CROMBRUGGHE SAID ONLY THE BELGIAN AMBASSADOR JOINED THE FIVE-PERSON EU DELEGATION IN THE MUGABE MEETING. THE ZIMBABWEAN PRESIDENT WAS JOINED BY FOREIGN MINISTER MUDENGE, MFA PERMANENT SECRETARY WILLARD CHIWEWE, DEFENSE MINISTER SEKERAMAYI, AND CHIEF

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OF DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE GENERAL CHEDONDZO.

14. (C) ACCORDING TO CROMBRUGGHE, MICHEL BEGAN BY SAYING THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THE DELEGATION'S VISIT WAS TO DISCUSS DEVELOPMENTS IN THE DRC, BUT THAT IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO AVOID RAISING THE DOMESTIC SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE AS WELL. HIS INTRODUCTORY REMARKS APPARENTLY PROVOKED NO NEGATIVE REACTION FROM THE ZIMBABWEAN SIDE, AND PRESIDENT MUGABE WAS DIPLOMATIC AND FORTHCOMING AT THE OUTSET. MUGABE STAYED TRUE TO FORM BY PROVIDING HIS DETAILED HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON ZIMBABWE'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE DRC, EMPHASIZING THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN INVITED IN.

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WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN FORCES

15. (C) MUGABE STRESSED THE GOZ'S COMMITMENT TO THE LUSAKA PROCESS, BUT WARNED THAT A WITHDRAWAL BY ZIMBABWEAN FORCES NOW WOULD CREATE SECURITY PROBLEMS. THUS ZIMBABWE WOULD WAIT TO WITHDRAW UNTIL THE UNITED NATIONS DEPLOYED FULLY. WHEN SOLANA PRESSED HARD FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF FOREIGN TROOPS, MUGABE SAID TROOPS CAN BE WITHDRAWN AT ANY TIME BUT REITERATED THAT THIS STEP SHOULD HINGE UPON THE CREATION OF A SUFFICIENTLY SECURE ENVIRONMENT. MICHEL SAID HE WAS NOT SURE THAT MONUC WOULD BE ABLE TO DEPLOY THE LARGE NUMBERS DESIRED BY MUGABE BUT THAT HE HOPED DDR COULD PROCEED IN THE MEANTIME. MUGABE MAINTAINED THAT ZIMBABWEAN TROOPS HAVE COMPLIED WITH THE REQUIREMENT TO WITHDRAW 15 KM FROM THE FRONT LINE, IN CONTRAST TO RWANDA, WHICH HAD MERELY REPLACED ITS SOLDIERS WITH FIGHTERS FROM RCD-GOMA. MUDENGE INSISTED THAT ZIMBABWE WOULD NOT MAINTAIN ITS MILITARY PRESENCE IN THE DRC ANY LONGER THAN NECESSARY BECAUSE OF THE EXPENSE.

INTERNAL DIALOGUE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 HARARE 003539

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16. (C) MICHEL REGRETTED THE FAILURE OF THE INITIAL INTERNAL DIALOGUE MEETING IN ADDIS ABABA, BUT REPORTED THAT PRESIDENT KABILA AND FACILITATOR MASIRE HAD AGREED WITH HIM IN KINSHASA ON THE NEED FOR ANOTHER MEETING SOON, BUT ONE THAT WOULD BE PRECEDED BY SMALLER, PREPARATORY DISCUSSIONS. AIELLO SAID THE EU RECOGNIZED THAT PRESIDENT KABILA WOULD BE PRESIDENT DURING A TRANSITION PERIOD LEADING TO ELECTIONS, BUT NOTED THAT, IN SOME COUNTRIES, A TRANSITION PERIOD FOLLOWED AN ELECTION. PATTEN ADDED THAT THERE WAS AGREEMENT WITHIN THE EU THAT KABILA SHOULD LEAD THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD, AND MICHEL SAID HE THOUGHT THE REBELS WOULD ACCEPT THIS. MUGABE ASSERTED THAT PRESIDENT KABILA RISKS BEING TOPPLED IF THE TRANSITION PERIOD COMES FIRST, BUT SAID THAT DECISION IS UP TO THE CONGOLESE PEOPLE. HE HOPED THAT MASIRE WOULD MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THIS POINT.

17. (C) WHEN MICHEL SOLICITED MUGABE'S COMMENT ON THE RECENT UN REPORT ON THE EXPLOITATION OF RESOURCES IN THE DRC, THE CONVERSATION BEGAN TO GO DOWNHILL QUICKLY, CROMBRUGGHE REPORTED. MUGABE CALLED THE REPORT "ABSOLUTE NONSENSE," SAYING EVERYTHING ZIMBABWE HAD DONE IN THE DRC HAD BEEN DONE IN CONSULTATION WITH THE KINSHASA GOVERNMENT. THE DRC GOVERNMENT, HE INSISTED, HAD NEVER COMPLAINED ABOUT ZIMBABWE'S INVOLVEMENT. HE DISMISSED THE REPORT COMPLETELY, SAYING IT HAD BEEN INSTIGATED BY THE BRITISH. THE EU TEAM, MUGABE SAID, WAS PUTTING ITS CREDIBILITY ON THE LINE

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 BY EVEN MENTIONING IT. MUDENGE ADDED THAT THE REPORT HAD NOT BEEN ENDORSED BY THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL. SOLANA EMPHASIZED THAT THE REPORT EXPRESSED THE POSITION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. NO, IT DOESN'T, MUGABE REPLIED, IT EXPRESSES ONLY THE POSITION OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT.

ELECTION OBSERVERS

18. (C) MICHEL THEN RAISED THE ISSUE OF INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVERS, ELICITING A "VERY AGGRESSIVE" REACTION FROM MUGABE, ACCORDING TO CROMBRUGGHE. MUGABE'S RESPONSE WAS ALONG THE LINES OF "WE DON'T NEED YOUR HELP, WE DON'T WANT YOU TO ORGANIZE OUR ELECTIONS. LEAVE US ALONE." HE THEN ADDED, SOMEWHAT CRYPTICALLY, THAT MARGARET THATCHER WAS "A LADY YOU CAN TALK TO." MUDENGE RAISED A POINT OF ORDER, NOTING THAT THE BELGIANS, IN THE NOTE REQUESTING THE MEETING, HAD INDICATED THAT THE DELEGATION ONLY INTENDED TO DISCUSS THE DRC. AT THAT POINT, A VISIBLY IRRITATED MUGABE STOOD UP AND LEFT THE ROOM, WITH NARY A WORD OR HANDSHAKE. THE EU DELEGATION WAS APPARENTLY "FLABBERTASTED," AND MICHEL COMMENTED PRIVATELY TO THE BELGIAN AMBASSADOR THAT MUGABE'S REACTION HAD BEEN OVER THE TOP AND IRRATIONAL. MUDENGE APPEARED TO HAVE BEEN TAKEN BY SURPRISE BY HIS BOSS'S UNEXPECTED WITHDRAWAL FROM THE ROOM, AND SAID QUICKLY TO THE DELEGATION THAT THE GOZ WOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE ARTICLE 96 DIALOGUE. LATER IN THE DAY, A SENIOR MFA OFFICIAL PHONED THE BELGIAN EMBASSY TO CONVEY OFFICIALLY THE GOZ'S AGREEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ARTICLE 96 PROCESS.

PRESS CONFERENCE

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19. (C) CROMBRUGGHE SAID HE HAD ARRANGED A PRESS CONFERENCE IN THE VIP DEPARTURE LOUNGE LATER IN THE DAY, BUT MINISTRY OF INFORMATION OFFICIALS INITIALLY PROHIBITED THE PARTICIPATION OF JOURNALISTS FROM THE INDEPENDENT PRESS. ONLY AFTER HE INSISTED THAT THEY BE ADMITTED AND PERSONALLY ESCORTED THEM FROM A HOLDING ROOM AT THE OTHER END OF THE AIRPORT WERE THEY ABLE TO INTERACT WITH MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION. THE EU OFFICIALS WERE UNUSUALLY CANDID WITH THE REPORTERS, SAYING THAT THE TALKS WITH MUGABE HAD BEEN "VERY FRANK AND VERY DIFFICULT." SOLANA TOLD JOURNALISTS THAT "WE PUT IT CLEARLY TO HIM THAT UNLESS THEY COMPLY WITH THE MINIMUM CONDITIONS FOR THE RUNNING OF THE ELECTIONS, IT WILL BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR THE ELECTION RESULTS TO BE RECOGNIZED BY THE EU." MICHEL SAID THE TEAM WANTED TO HAVE A FRANK DISCUSSION WITH MUGABE BUT THAT "TODAY, IT WAS NOT EASY TO DO." PATTEN ADDED THAT "ALL I CAN SAY IS WE DID NOT HAVE A MEETING OF THE MINDS WITH PRESIDENT MUGABE" AND THAT THE EU WOULD "INSIST ON THE BASIC MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR CLEAN ELECTIONS."

110. (U) NOT SURPRISINGLY, THE GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED MEDIA PRAISED MUGABE FOR STANDING UP TO HIS INTERLOCUTORS, INDICATED BY THE ABOVE-THE-FOLD HEADLINE IN NOVEMBER 24 EDITION OF "THE HERALD" -- "PRESIDENT TELLS EU OFF." THE ARTICLE REPORTED THAT MUGABE HAD

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	L-00	AC-01	NSAE-00	NSCE-00	OIC-02	OMB-01	PA-00
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TOLD THE DELEGATION TO "KEEP OUT OF ZIMBABWE'S AFFAIRS" AND THAT HE HAD DISMISSED AS "ABSOLUTELY NONSENSICAL" THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL'S RECENT REPORT ON ZIMBABWE'S EXPLOITATION OF DRC RESOURCES. AT A PUBLIC EVENT FOLLOWING THE FATEFUL MEETING, MUGABE TOLD THE ASSEMBLED CROWD THAT THE EU SHOULD KEEP OUT OF ZIMBABWE, AS "SOME OF THEM WERE OUR FORMER COLONIZERS. WE HAVE ENOUGH EXPERIENCE IN HOLDING ELECTIONS AND WE DO NOT NEED THEIR ASSISTANCE."

COMMENT

¶11. (C) PRESIDENT MUGABE'S ANGRY REACTION APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN DISPROPORTIONATE, AND SUGGESTS THAT HE IS NOT INTERESTED IN ENGAGING THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY ON HOW TO EXTRICATE ZIMBABWE FROM ITS CURRENT CRISIS, IF SUCH ENGAGEMENT IMPLIES ANY ACCEPTANCE OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS. THE NOVEMBER 23 EXCHANGE WILL LIKELY WORSEN AN ALREADY STRAINED EU-ZIMBABWE RELATIONSHIP, BUT MUGABE SEEMS INCREASINGLY WILLING TO WAG HIS FINGER -- WHICHEVER FINGER -- AT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. MUDENGE, WHO IS OFTEN ONE OF THE GOZ'S MOST STRIDENT VOICES, WAS APPARENTLY NONPLussed BY HIS BOSS'S BEHAVIOR, AND THE GOZ'S QUICK ACCEPTANCE OF THE ARTICLE 96 DIALOGUE SO SOON AFTER THE UNFORTUNATE MEETING WAS A CLEAR ATTEMPT AT DAMAGE CONTROL. WE ARE COMING TO THE CONCLUSION, HOWEVER, THAT AS LONG AS MUGABE REMAINS THE GOZ'S ONLY REAL DECISION-MAKER, WE ARE UNLIKELY TO SEE MUCH PROGRESS ON THE ISSUES OF CONCERN TO US, THE EU, THE COMMONWEALTH,

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AND ZIMBABWE'S NEIGHBORS.

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